1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

812 829 some experience new identical traditions, there follows the readily accepted assumption that the world contains different kinds of knowledge and different truths.

814 Despite the fact that the Indian lacks the ability to formulate ideas in strict chronological sequence (we have already referred to the difficulties experienced in securing chronological life histories), he may be credited with a historical sense. Examples of native history have been presented in reporting the traditional ideas of Kaska origins and the memories of life in the aboriginal society. This material is distinguished by its static, rather than dialectic quality, no attempt being made to relate the events which are described. As pointed out in connection with acculturation, the Kaska are not attracted to the past. There is relatively little interest in hankering back to aboriginal times, certainly no sentimentalism. Only occasionally will a contemporary incident move some man to describe the event as similar to behavior which was commonplace in former days. Such historical attitudes promise that in one or two more generations the ability to report "old fashioned" life will have entirely disappeared.

ETHICS

577 183 Ethically and morally, as well as philosophically, the Kaska are inclined to be relativists, particularly when non-Indian behavioral norms are discussed. Thus people asked the ethnographer if it was true that white people sometimes married their parallel cousins, whom the Kaska classify as siblings. An affirmative answer met with no criticism or repugnance. Moral relativism is noted chiefly in connection with marital and sexual behavior; aggression and lack of generosity are not so tolerantly regarded. In the latter fields, the Indians tend to recognize more absolute values. Thus the second World War appeared to confuse many informants, and local traders are often criticized for neglecting to meet the Indians' standard of generosity.

The Kaska express the same theoretical conflict between free will and determinism that is familiar to students of western society. As evidence of determinism we may cite the fact that a person is thought to be bad because he has "bad blood." This evil disposition is inherited, so that an evil man produces evil children. Opposing these ideas is the belief that an evil person can be taught to control his behavior. It is possible too for a good man to produce bad children, since it is often through error that good people commit evil—they "make mistake." Although this conflict between free will and determinism comes out in interviews, in everyday life there is little question of the moral accountability of the individual.

Abstract ethical ideals, like righteousness and justice, have little meaning for the Indian. When forced to concern himself with formulating ideal conceptions of human nature, he is primarily concerned with such concrete individual and social virtues as generosity, industriousness, pacificity, courage, skill, and (in women) marital chastity.

909 577 183 The ideal man is first of all generous. He gives good gifts and helps out a friend who is in need of food or of some capital goods like traps or cartridges. A good man is not pugnacious or "mean"; he is disinclined to unfavorably gossip and hypocrisy, nor does he seek to exert authority. He avoids talking unfavorably about his friends, is not cranky, and will not fight unless unduly provoked. Putting these traits more positively, virtue may be recognized in a pleasant disposition. A good man is ready to laugh and eager for fun. When he drinks he enjoys himself, but "he don't fight nothing." Finally, the ideal male esteems industry. He is,

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as Nels explained, a "good trapper. He watch his trap line. Every two days he look his traps, fix his traps. He hunt too." He keeps his house well supplied with meat, wood, and grub. The ideal man shows courage without being foolhardy. "Somebody fight him, he tell him: 'Don't fight.' He save his life that way." Associated with the idea of courage is the ability to withstand discomfort. A good man must be "tough," able to travel long distances on foot, while bearing up under cold and hunger. In his ideal proportions a man shows skillfulness; he traps well, can make necessary tools, apparatus, and vehicles, and undertake a variety of repairs. Male informants did not report marital faithfulness as an ideal masculine virtue.

The primary qualifications for the ideal woman are faithfulness, thrift, industry, and skill. "You get a good woman," Nels explained, "He can't leave you. Me, I want him. [If] I watch that girl. 'You leave him, that fellow'—that kind of woman no good. Good woman—try, try I get him—he don't want me. That number one woman. Smart woman." Not only does the concept of marital faithfulness include an absence of extramarital promiscuity, but it also denotes a wife's devotion to her husband, her care for his welfare and comfort. A woman's thrift also reflects her virtue. Thus Old Man often praised his wife for the manner in which she earned money by trapping and selling her own fur, saving the proceeds. So far as a woman's industriousness is concerned: "Good woman wash clothes, do something, cook anything. Fix the plates. Damn number one woman. That woman just the same queen. She catch fur too. She help her man. Best one." Feminine virtue includes skill. A good woman can cook well, trap effectively, lace good snowshoes, and make outstanding moccasins and clothes. A skilful industrious woman will not visit around too often but spends most of her time keeping her camp in order. Courage is not valued in a woman. Generosity, with those objects which a woman controls, and absence of aggression are further female virtues. An ideal woman may drink, but in doing so she "look after her man; wouldn't bother another man. Just talk fun."

RELIGION

Religious beliefs are of minor importance in Kaska life and the culture includes no religious ceremonials beyond the Mass and other introduced Catholic devotions. The general conception of the supernatural consists of an imposition of Christian (Catholic) attitudes on vague and disappearing elements of native belief. Both the Christian and the aboriginal elements are loosely comprehended, although an attempt has been in the mission schools to formulate Christian beliefs in children. The general orientation of the religion tends to place all natural phenomena, including human life, in a universe controlled by supernatural agencies or "bosses." Since the techniques for soliciting this supernatural power are little stressed the individual—as well as all of nature of which he is part—would seem to enjoy a kind of fatalistic existence. This deduction is partly belied by the fact that the relative absence of supernatural supplication does not stem from attitudes of fatalism, but rather from an empirically grounded idea that in everyday things the individual's persistence and activity must also be counted on to solve problems of living.

Three main orders of the supernatural environment are distinguished by the Kaska. The first of these contains the executive agencies of natural phenomena—the "bosses" of the

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838 sought young men as sexual partners, with whom he secured orgasm by apposing the glans of the penes. In the morning the homosexual rewarded his lovers with gifts, treating them "just as good as women." Although dressing as a man, the homosexual removed his clothing during sexual relations. Once he tried to secure anal intromission with a sleeping man who had been eating fat and who defecated against his would-be seducer. Female homosexuals simulated copulation by "getting on top of each other." Such women were often transvestites, but no male transvestites could be recalled. Sometimes if a couple had too many female children and desired a son to hunt for them in later years, they selected a daughter to be "like a man."[20] When she was about five year's old the parents tied the dried ovaries of a bear to her inner belt. She wore this amulet for the rest of her life in order to avoid conception. The girl was raised as a boy. She dressed in masculine attire and performed male allocated tasks, often developing great strength and usually becoming an outstanding hunter. She screamed and broke the bow and arrows of any boy who made sexual advances to her. "She knows that if he gets her then her luck with game will be broken." Apparently such a girl entered homosexual relationships.

839 Behavior corresponding to sexual sadism, masochism, and exhibitionism could not be recalled. Mentally ill women and old men sometimes publicly revealed their genitals. Voyeurs received a scolding but were not physically punished. Animal contacts occurred only rarely. Necrophilia appears to have been totally incompatible with the prevailing attitudes toward the dead, an interpretation concurred in by our informant.[21]

832 *Dease River Kaska.* Love songs constituted a means of winning girls' favors and also
833 possessed magical properties designed to create favorable attitudes toward the wooer.
838 In coitus the woman lay on her back. Cunnilinctus was denied but a rare woman
839 performed fellatio as a preliminary to intercourse. Berdaches were unknown but the informant agreed that both male and female homosexuality sometimes occurred. Homosexual men engaged in sodomy, oral contacts being carefully avoided. Two women achieved orgasm through clitoral friction. An upper Liard River informant reported a case in which some Dease River youths who had killed a cow moose copulated with the animal, an act blamed for the subsequent depopulation of the Dease basin.

MARRIAGE

581 *Upper Liard Kaska.* Ideally marriages were for permanency and a man who tried to
586 leave his wife would be urged by the community to reconsider his decision. Despite these ideal attitudes divorce was common.

581 A man sought a wife "to dry meat for him," sew clothing, cook his meals, and perform
[585] the many other services culturally allocated to women. Marriage brought a youth a certain increment in prestige, marking as it did the transition to adulthood. It promised

[20] In Montenegro and other Balkan countries it was not uncommon for a girl to swear virginity and occupy the role of a son in a family without boys. Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans* (1928), 211.

[21] See below, p. 137. Thus do cultures limit the scope of deviation. See Mead, *Male and Female* (1949), 147.